

lichenea Hübn., common, two specimens of *Schrankia costaestrigalis* Steph., several *Leucania l-album* L., mostly worn, and several *Acleria cristana* Schiff. in lovely forms. Neither of us wished to come home, but work forced us back on the 27th. This more or less finished the season except for *Ptilophora plumigera* Schiff., which again, with great regularity, appeared on the 7th November. Due to bad weather, few were seen, although the third female for Medmenham turned up, from which I got about ten ova.

These notes are the last from my present address. We are moving to Chesterfield shortly, where I shall have the excellent company of Mr. Brian Elliot on mothing trips even if moths themselves will be much less numerous. Medmenham has been a wonderful place in which to begin my mothing career and I have recorded 400 species in the garden in four years. I cannot hope for a garden like this again, but perhaps having to work harder for my moths will be a useful mental and physical exercise. However, having made the decision to move north, we are now looking forward to the new venture and owning our own house. I hope I can find something interesting to make it worth while writing of my collecting experiences in 1966.

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Plastics in Entomology

By Dr. R. G. AINLEY

Since Hitler's war, plastics have become so much a part of our everyday lives that we take them for granted, and it was only to be expected that these versatile materials would find a place among the paraphernalia of the entomologist. Of course we all know about net hoops, net bags and larva sleeves made of nylon, perspex pillboxes and Petri dishes, cellulose acetate envelopes and breeding cylinders. The purpose of this communication is to draw attention to two uses of plastics which the author has found of great practical value in collecting Lepidoptera.

The first is a relaxing chamber, constructed as follows. The basis is a "lunch box" or "sandwich box" made of translucent polythene, and marketed by our best-known chain-store for a few shillings. The cardinal virtue of this is its self-sealing lid, which effectively prevents the escape of moisture. Next, a rectangular platform is cut from $\frac{1}{4}$ " perspex sheet so that it is slightly smaller than the dimensions of the box, leaving a gap of about $\frac{1}{4}$ " between it and the sides of the box. Numerous holes are drilled in the perspex platform, honeycomb-fashion, and the platform is attached to four "feet" on which it stands in the polythene box, to leave a space about $1\frac{1}{2}$ " deep between it and the lid of the box. Relaxing fluid (e.g. water containing a little phenol to inhibit mould) is poured on to the floor of the box to a depth of about $\frac{1}{8}$ ", specimens are laid out on the perspex platform, and the lid is sealed in position. Specimens take about 48 hours to relax. The advantage of the method is that, since the wings are lying on a perfectly smooth surface (the perspex platform) there is no danger of scales adhering to the surface with which they are in contact, as tends to occur when using damp cloth, lint or sand. A few strips of cork can be fixed to the top of the perspex platform by means of a resin adhesive, to take pinned specimens as necessary.

The second is the use of stiff transparent plastic sheet for setting specimens. This is sold under the name of "Polyglaze" for double-glazing windows, and by means of a paper guillotine or a photographer's trimmer, can quickly be cut into strips of any desired width and length. One sheet will provide enough strips to serve the average collector for a season's captures, and each strip can be turned over and used again. This material has the following advantages.

(a) It is cheap.

(b) Although it is thin enough to be pierced easily by all sizes of entomological pin, it is *stiff*. As a result, fewer pins are required to maintain the wings in position, and it cannot fold up or form creases, nor slacken off after the specimen has been set. Further, because of its stiffness, once the forewing has been moved into the desired position under the strip, it can be held *in situ* by gentle downward pressure of a finger over the wingtip without danger of the strip slipping and causing damage while the hindwing is moved up. Thus, some of the defects inherent in the use of setting paper are avoided, and since the plastic exerts an even flattening pressure on the wings there is less tendency for the latter to curl up after removal of the specimen from the board.

(c) The plastic is perfectly transparent, facilitating the study of specimens while they are still on the boards.

One word of caution. The use of "Polyglaze" should be avoided for setting very small Lepidoptera because (as with nylon underwear) a charge of static electricity often tends to build up on the plastic, so that setting is rendered difficult by the electrostatic attraction of the wings of small insects to the plastic strip. With larger insects (the size of *Heodes phlaeas* and above) the inertia of the wing is greater and this problem does not arise. It is my practice to use a single strip for each side of the setting board and to get the antennae in position before bringing the strip down on to the forewing.

These methods may not be original, though I know of no other Lepidopterists who use them. I have found them to have many virtues, and feel that they might well be tried with advantage by others.

Entomological Notes of Captures and Observations in 1965

By S. WAKELY

The author apologises for the lateness of these notes, but hopes they will none the less be of interest and help to readers. Microlepidopterists in particular should find them useful.

ESSEX.—South Benfleet was visited on the 19th June when larval cases of *Coleophora conspiculella* Zell. were fairly common on *Centaurea nigra* (Hardhead). This local moth is rather difficult to rear if the larva is not full-fed and seems to require sunlight when feeding. However, if about to pupate, the cases can be found attached to herbage in the vicinity of plants which show conspicuous signs of larval feeding places and the imagines are easy to breed from cases taken in this way. Col. A. M. Emmet showed me a spot where he had recently found the cases of a Coleophorid feeding on the undersides of the leaves of *Artemisia vulgaris* (Mugwort). Neither of us had found cases on this plant before, and it was